



## Neighborhood Association Policy

### Definitions

*Neighborhood:* A geographic area defined by the City that exists as a sub-area within the City as a whole. Each property within the City resides within a single Neighborhood.

*Neighbors:* People or legal entities owning or occupying property within a Neighborhood.

*Neighborhood Association:* A voluntary Neighborhood-based organization, recognized by the City, and in compliance with this policy.

### Purpose

The City encourages the voluntary formation of Neighborhood Associations for the purpose of facilitating communication between residents, City staff and officials, fostering interaction between individuals on issues of common geographic concern and building a better community through cooperative action.

In keeping with this philosophy, the City will seek to notify and consult with Neighborhood Associations on matters of Neighborhood interest. For example, Neighborhood Associations will be notified when:

- Significant Neighborhood projects are being discussed or proposed such as street reconstruction, park development or redevelopment or land use planning.
- A mailing goes out to residents in the Neighborhood related to a City matter or public hearing.
- A developer requests a Neighborhood meeting for the purpose of sketch plan review.
- The City is seeking to organize a Neighborhood group for resident input.

### Expectations

The following expectations exist with respect to Neighborhood Associations:

- Neighborhood Associations will be included in the public input process but will not be assumed by City officials to speak on behalf of all Neighbors and will not limit the ability of any person or entity, including non-recognized Neighborhood groups, to participate on their own behalf. Communication with the Neighborhood Association will not replace the City's traditional methods of direct outreach to residents.
- Neighborhood Associations are strictly voluntary and no Neighbor will be required to participate. Each Neighborhood Association will determine its own priorities and desired level of activity.
- Neighborhood Associations will not assume the role of an administrative or legislative body. Neighborhood Associations have no legal authority to enact or enforce property design or maintenance requirements.
- Only one Neighborhood Association may exist in each Neighborhood, as identified in the official Neighborhood map.

### Bylaws

In order to be recognized as a Neighborhood Association by the City, Neighborhood Associations are required to adopt bylaws that include the following minimum standards:

- An outline of the Neighborhood boundaries as defined by the City;
- Membership criteria allowing any Neighbor over the age of 18 the right to belong and to vote;
- A statement that the Neighborhood Association will not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, familial status or national origin in connection with employment, housing and real property, public accommodations, public services, credit and education;
- One annual meeting with notice to all addresses within the geographic boundaries;
- Procedures for the election and removal of leadership; and
- Method of determining quorum and how votes are taken and recorded at annual meetings.

Changes or amendments to the bylaws shall be provided to the City staff liaison.

### **Recognition**

A group of Neighbors intending to form a recognized Neighborhood Association or seeking recognition of an existing Neighborhood organization must notify the City staff liaison. The recognition steps are as follows:

- Upon request, an educational meeting may be conducted by the City staff liaison regarding steps to organize.
- The organizing committee notifies, in writing, all Neighbors of the opportunity to vote on becoming a recognized Neighborhood Association and the proposed Neighborhood Association bylaws. Upon request, the City will pay for and coordinate an initial mailing.
- Upon an affirmative vote, the Association formally applies for recognition and submits a completed recognition application and minutes from the meeting during which the neighbors voted to seek recognition and a copy of the current or proposed Association bylaws.
- The City staff liaison will forward the application materials to the City Manager for review and approval. The City Manager will notify in writing the Neighborhood Association and City Council of his or her decision with regard to recognition. Neighborhood Associations can appeal the decision of the City Manager to the City Council.

### **Removal of Recognition**

The City Manager has the authority to remove recognition from a Neighborhood Association if the Association fails to comply with any requirement of this Policy. Prior to the removal of recognition, the Neighborhood Association will be given written notice of non-compliance and a period of 60 days to achieve compliance. If the City Manager removes recognition, the Neighborhood Association and City Council will be informed of his or her decision in writing. Neighborhood Associations may reapply for recognition without prejudice.

### **Funding**

Membership fees, when established by the bylaws of a Neighborhood Association, shall be voluntary and shall not preclude any neighbor from participating in the Neighborhood Association. Neighborhood Associations may charge fees for events or activities that do not include voting on Association business. The City shall not serve as the fiduciary agent for a Neighborhood Association. Any Association which raises money outside of a city-sponsored grant or program is responsible for complying with applicable state and federal laws. If funds are disbursed by the City for use by an Association, the Association may be required to provide documentation of appropriate use. Failure to do so will result in removal of recognition.

### **City Staff Liaison**

The City will assign a staff liaison to recognized Neighborhood Associations. The role of the staff liaison will be to:

- Provide information about the role and organization of Neighborhood Associations, both generally and in direct consultation with residents;
- Receive and process applications for Neighborhood Association recognition;
- Ensure that the recognition requirements are met and notify the Neighborhood Association and City Manager of any shortcomings;
- Maintain City records related to Neighborhood Associations;
- Work with the Communications and Technology Services Department to facilitate the communication activities outlined in this policy;
- Develop and maintain a City speaker list and contact speakers upon request from a Neighborhood Association;
- Educate City staff on the role of Neighborhood Associations and how to fully engage Neighborhood Associations as a valued resource;
- Refer issues brought forward by Neighborhood Associations to appropriate staff; and
- Advise the City Council on issues related to Neighborhoods or Neighborhood Associations and draft or revise related policies.

It is not the role of the City staff liaison to organize a Neighborhood on behalf of a proposed Neighborhood Association or to advocate positions on behalf of Neighborhood Associations.

### **Communication Support**

The City shall not serve as the primary communication vehicle for Neighborhood Associations. The City's Communications and Technology Services Department will provide basic communication support to Neighborhood Associations to ensure that residents are aware of their existence within the community. Basic communication support from the City includes:

- **Website Page:** The landing page will include the Neighborhood boundaries and notable features, Neighborhood Association bylaws, regular meeting place and time of Neighborhood Association meetings, Neighborhood Association contact information, and links to the Neighborhood Association website or other online resource.
- **Initial Mailer:** Upon request, the City will pay for and coordinate a Neighborhood-wide postcard mailing notifying residents of a meeting to vote on the potential formation of a recognized Neighborhood Association. Content must be delivered to the Communications and Technology Services Department at least 21 days in advance of the organization meeting date to ensure timely delivery. Postcard mailings will be addressed to "Resident."
- **Copying:** Upon request, the City will provide copying once annually for each association in an amount equivalent to the Neighborhood's estimated population (double-sided, on 8.5" by 11" paper). Associations should anticipate a 2-3 day turnaround for each copying project. Associations can maximize the copy services provided by the City by using half sheet flyers.
- **About Town Listing:** Recognized Neighborhood Associations and their contact information will be highlighted annually in *About Town*.

Communication with the Neighborhood Association will not replace the City's traditional methods of direct outreach to residents. Any communication facilitated by the City is subject to the City's communication policies and ordinances. As a result, the City will not facilitate any communication that is inconsistent with its policies, general operating principles, or the City Code. Examples of communication

that would be inconsistent with City policies include items that are discriminatory or politically partisan in nature.

### **Neighborhood Boundary Changes**

The City has defined boundaries for each Neighborhood. Neighborhood Associations may propose both technical corrections and Neighborhood boundary changes.

*Technical Corrections.* Technical corrections are minor changes regarding the placement of the boundary line on the map. For example, a technical correction could entail shifting a boundary line to include the properties on both sides of a street. Technical corrections impact a small number of properties. To apply for a technical correction to a Neighborhood's boundary, the Neighborhood Association must submit a written request to the City staff liaison along with the minutes from the meeting at which the organization's members voted to make the change. The City staff liaison will forward the request to the Neighborhood Association(s) of any adjoining impacted Neighborhoods for review and comment. The City staff liaison will forward the request and any comments from the adjoining impacted Neighborhood Associations(s) to the City Council for review. The City Council has the sole authority to approve or deny any technical corrections.

*Boundary Changes.* Boundary changes represent a larger change with respect to the geographic definition of the neighborhood. Boundary changes have the potential to impact a large number of properties. For example, a boundary change could entail moving the boundary from one street to another street located a few blocks away. To promote stability and growth of the Neighborhood Association system, and in recognition of the significant public process involved in creating Neighborhood names and boundaries, boundary change requests will be considered only at time of application for initial recognition, or any time within two years of initial recognition. In addition, any boundary change request that creates Neighborhood(s) with less than 70 parcels will not be considered. To apply for a boundary change, the organizing committee must submit the request to the City staff liaison along with a Neighborhood petition demonstrating the support of a majority of households. The City staff liaison will forward the request to the Neighborhood Association of any adjoining impacted Neighborhoods for review and comment. The City staff liaison will forward the request and any comments from the adjoining impacted Neighborhood Association(s) to the City Council for review. The City Council has the sole authority to approve or deny any boundary changes.

### **Neighborhood Name Changes**

The City has defined names for each Neighborhood that are listed on the official Neighborhood map. Neighborhood Associations may apply to change the official Neighborhood name at time of application for initial recognition, or any time within one year of recognition. After one year, the official Neighborhood name cannot be changed. To apply for a name change, the Neighborhood Association must submit a request to the City staff liaison to change the Neighborhood name along with the minutes from the meeting at which the organization's members voted to change the name and a summary of how the Association collected data regarding the name preference of their Neighbors. The City staff liaison will forward the request to the City Council for review. The City Council has the sole authority to approve or deny any name changes.

## **Additional Benefits**

### *Meeting Space*

City-owned meeting space available for public use will be offered free of charge for any Neighborhood Association meetings or events that are free to the public (no charge). If City staff are required to open or monitor the building, the Neighborhood Association may be charged a recovery fee. City-sponsored meetings and programming will take precedence over Neighborhood Association meetings, and Neighborhood Association meetings may be “bumped” from a City facility with a minimum of 30 days’ notice.

### *Guest Speakers*

The City will develop and maintain a list of City staff that can be scheduled as guest speakers by Neighborhood Associations. City staff may be available to speak on special topics by request. The guest speaker program is designed for education and information sharing purposes.

### *Annual Workshop*

City staff will coordinate an annual workshop to facilitate the sharing of ideas and best practices between Neighborhood Associations and to gather suggestions from Neighborhood Associations for City staff.

### *Annual Award*

Each year the Mayor will give a Neighborhood Association Award during the Annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet to recognize community building efforts by the City’s Neighborhood Associations. Nominations for the award will be solicited from all Neighborhood Associations prior to the event.